

This MUST Be

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A Forty Million Dollar Express Company Trust—Maybe

It Ought to Be a Very Big Maybe. Why Fasten Such A Parasite on Government Railroad Control?

This announcement appears in a quiet corner of a quiet newspaper:

\$40,000,000 MERGER IN EXPRESS SERVICE, MAYBE

Below this interesting heading comes the statement:

Heads of express companies discussed today with the railroad administration a proposal for consolidating the express companies into one corporation, which would be authorized by Director General McAdoo to conduct all the express business in the country. The corporation would have capital stock of about \$40,000,000, divided among the companies in proportion to the physical valuation of their properties.

Is the fact that the Government has taken over the railroads to give express companies a chance to form a trust and violate the Sherman law?

Are the broken-down express companies to be permitted to violate the law in the name of "war emergency?" If any power in the country is to control the express business, should it not be the Government, THE POSTOFFICE of the United States?

An express company trust such as is here proposed would put the senders of express matter entirely at the mercy of that trust.

There would be no competition, not even pretended competition.

There would be no occasion for spending money to give good service—the senders would have to wait.

This express company trust, the mere suggestion of which is outrageous, and discreditable to Government administration of railroads, will not be permitted, unless somebody with a great deal of power has listened to extremely interesting arguments from somebody with a good deal of "influence" and wanting more.

The people of this country are being taxed to spend billions of dollars rebuilding the railroads.

Are the private owners of express companies to form a Trust, utilize the spending of this money, use the railroads for which the people are paying, and use those railroads TO ROB SHIPPERS?

This thing is being done in the absence of Mr. McAdoo, the Director of Railroads, who is away selling bonds, and would not tolerate such a scheme for public robbery.

We hope that one of his secretaries will see the announcement printed here and telegraph it to Secretary McAdoo.

It will not, if Mr. McAdoo can prevent it, be said that while he was Director of Railroads, and spending hundreds of millions of public money to rebuild railroads, a gang of express company owners were allowed, in violation of the Sherman act, to form themselves into a Trust and fasten themselves upon Mr. McAdoo's railroad system.

We don't know how express company gentlemen go to work, when they want to defy a law against Trusts, and convince somebody in office that they should be permitted to exploit Government management of the railroads and the public.

But we believe that Mr. McAdoo, who has had considerable experience in Wall Street, when he was engaged in his important work of building the Hudson tunnels, knows how these things are done and knows HOW TO PREVENT THEM. Mr. Hines, by the way, now in one of Mr. McAdoo's departments, can help Mr. McAdoo to get at the facts. Mr. Hines has information.

The express companies should go out of business, for they are incompetent and have no place as parasites on the publicly owned railroads.

They have had their day, and their share of profits, and their period of extortion.

Any physical property that they have worth while should be taken over by the Government and used, and made part of the parcels post system. That system should carry all packages, except matter under refrigeration, and unsuitable bulky matter, which should be carried by a special Government system of fast freight.

Many pieces of rascality will be put through safely and smoothly in the confusion of war. But a rascally undertaking of this kind, the formation of an express company trust to prey upon the public, the shippers, and make the present bad service still worse, should not be carried out in the shadow in the offices of the national railroad administration.

It could not be carried out anywhere else, consequently there will be no difficulty for Mr. McAdoo to place the blame if the thing goes through in his absence, and if Government control of railroads, a step toward the inevitable Government ownership, should be used by private individuals for the formation of a dangerous Trust made up of incompetent, shipwrecked, inefficient concerns.

The parcels post now carries packages weighing seventy pounds. It should carry ALL PACKAGES.



Julius Caesar and Pope Gregory Got the Calendar in Shape

By Garrett P. Serviss.

I AM asked to give an opinion concerning a proposed new calendar by which the year would have 366 days, divided into twelve months, six of which would have thirty days and the other six thirty-one days each. The weeks would consist of six days, including five "working days" and one "resting day." Thus there would be sixty-one weeks in this new calendar year.

My opinion is that Julius Caesar—whose greatest achievement was not laying the foundation of Imperial Rome, but putting chaos out of the calendar—would turn in his grave at the suggestion of an attempt to thrust 66 days into a space of time that cannot contain even the 365½ days that he assigned to it without overcrowding.

Negligent Nature. When nature sets the earth spinning on its axis and at the same time speeding around the sun, she saw no necessity for making the two motions chronologically commensurate—i. e., she took no pains to have an even number of days in a year. To have done so would have been somewhat like requiring an athlete, in running a mile, to take exactly 1,760 steps each three feet long. Although such an arrangement would unquestionably be a great convenience for almanac makers, as well as for race-track timekeepers, the things are not done that way.

The length of a day is a fixed

quantity of time, and so is the length of a "year." Both depend upon movements of the earth, over which we have not the slightest control and which pay no attention to our arithmetic. To count 366 days for a year would be putting the calendar ahead of the sun at a rate so rapid that in a few years the seasons as shown by the almanac would drift out of all connection with those recognized by the weather and the planets. When Caesar established the "Julian year" he gave the world its first scientific calendar, although he got the fundamental idea from the old Egyptians.

The problem was, and always will be, to keep the calendar dates as close as possible in accord with the natural point of beginning of the year (for the Northern Hemisphere, which is the populous half of the globe), that point being the vernal equinox, when the sun crosses the equator coming northward after its winter excursion into the southern sky. To start with we might have the vernal equinox fall in any month we chose, and on any day of that month, but once fixed it ought to remain constant. Thus, as now arranged, the equinox falls on March 21, and all our almanac dates are set on that frame. If the equinox drifted forward or backward in the calendar, agricultural, as well as all other affairs, would be upset.

Caesar brought his new calendar into accord with the vernal equinox, and undertook to keep it in accord for the future. For this purpose he ascertained that there are about 365¼ days in a year. He therefore adopted that as the true length of a year, but to avoid fractions of days he ordered that three-quarters of the years should consist of 365 days and one-quarter of 366 days. In other words, the year was to comprise 365 days for three years in succession, but every fourth year was to contain 366 days, thus conveniently disposing of the fraction of one-fourth of a day, but not counting it until it added up one whole day. These fourths, or long years, were called leap years, the same term that we use today.

But now mark what happened to Caesar's calendar because of a slight excess of the length that he had calculated for the true year over the real length. The real length, with a decimal fraction, is 365.242197 days.

But Caesar's estimate was 365.23 days. Subtract the real length from Caesar's and you have for remainder .007803, or say 78-10000ths of a day, which is only about 11¼ minutes. Yet this very small excess, accumulating with the passage of the centuries at the rate of about three days in 400 years, had, by the year 1582, caused the vernal equinox to fall back on the calendar, to March 11. This was not very inconvenient for agriculture, but it was inconvenient for the calculation of Easter, and so Pope Gregory XIII. readjusted Caesar's calendar by dropping out ten days.

Catching Up. In Protestant countries like England the Gregorian reform was not adopted until 1752, by which time it had become necessary to drop eleven days from the calendar. The readjustment was perpetuated by simply changing Caesar's rule for leap year, so that instead of adding a day every four years the additional day should be omitted in every century year not divisible by 400. Thus 1900 was not a leap year, and 2100 will not be one.

By this simple device the reformed Julian year, or Gregorian year, was brought so near the real year in length that it is only twenty-six seconds too long. Now, imagine putting 366 days into a year. It would send the calendar ahead of the equinox more than eighteen hours every year, so that only 120 years would elapse before the calendar would be three months ahead of the equinox, and the snows of mid-winter would be covering the ground at the time when, if the calendar were to be believed, the farmer ought to be beginning his spring work.

The best thing to do is to let the calendar as it now stands be, and 3,000 years from now, if our descendants find that a single day discrepancy between the equinox and the almanac is too troublesome, they can easily correct it.

The Two-Platoon System

It Should Be In Effect In Our Fire Department.

By EARL GODWIN.

Our fire department needs a two-platoon system. To this end I would impress on Congress the importance of providing in District appropriation bill money to take care of this modern method of conducting a fire-fighting department.

The two-platoon system requires more men than the present method. It means two complete crews to be worked alternately. The present method provides one crew, and the men live in the engine house day and night with little time off, and nothing to do between fires but play checkers and sleep.

Unless a man is full of pep, a fireman's career in a fire-proof district is about as enlivening as the life of a prisoner in solitary confinement. He is on duty ninety-six hours continuously and gets twenty-four hours off, provided his turn is not blocked by fire duty or illness of some other member of the company. Each man has three hours for meals in every twenty-four hours, and has a twenty-day furlough annually.

Fire departments all over the country are discarding the old-time system for the new two-platoon system. In addition to working for the retirement of the members, it would provide a reserve force for Washington much bigger than anything now possible. For instance, if all our apparatus should be called out today on a city-wide fire, the men would be tired to the point of complete exhaustion by night, and there would be no relief in sight. Under the two-platoon system a fresh duplicate fire department would be waiting for the word to rush in.

See what Congressman Van Dyke of Minnesota has to say about the proposed system in writing his report on the legislation providing for the change:

"The two-platoon system is nothing more than a scientific adjustment of the fire force, serving two purposes. First, using the fire fighting apparatus to the utmost capacity, thereby decreasing the expense of purchasing and operating additional apparatus. Second, permitting the members of the department more time off duty, which will make for efficient service by reason of a contented personnel. This system would also place a reserve fire-fighting force at the command of the chief engineer, which, in the event of a large and long drawn out fire, could be called into service and relieve the shift already working at the fire, which would be more or less fatigued after a period of ten hours, and the shift coming on duty would be fresh and vigorous and could continue the work with much more progress."

HEARD AND SEEN

GEORGE AUTHIER says the road-way on Pennsylvania avenue in Georgetown is the worst in the world and has been for three years.

"JAKE" BERMAN, our well-known and energetic detective, is on duty in connection with the D. A. R. convention this week.

Went downtown in a car with a lady yesterday and she said TRAFFIC OFFICER LAMB, at Fourteenth and New York avenue, is the best looking man in Washington.

Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington, is open to visitors every day but Sunday. Now that this city is thronged with strangers and newcomers, I move that the historic old place, so often called "the shrine of American liberty" be open to the public every day in the week, especially SUNDAY. What do YOU say about it?

A. R. PINCI, who started ten years ago this month to have an Italian dinner, successfully handled the affair last night in his apartments in the California.

Among those present were CHARLES COTTERILL, ED CARINGTON, W. A. POLLARD, RUSS YOUNG, DR. R. GIORGIO, PAUL L. WRIGHT, and Private Frank Godwin, U. S. A.

FRANK WOODFIELD says that all this talk about pedestrians being careful at crossings makes him tired. "Did you ever notice how many automobiles run by the white chalk lines at street intersections?" he asks. "If pedestrians have any rights at all it is at crossings."

I am for JOHN ENGLAND, high school student, who petitions the Board of Education to abolish German as a language study. Taboo the Teutonic.

H. B. K. WILLIS, formerly of California, now in the office of the Chief of Staff, says he was amazed to find that he was charged \$75 a month for a "bathless" private two-room suite on the top floor of an antebellum abode, and amazed further when the woman renting them said she had been told by the local rooming committee that they were worth that much and that with a bath they would be worth \$100 a month!

Leaving the care of my neighborhood, H. C. CLAAS, assistant commander of patents, I ran head-on into the "ulv chest" of JOSH CALAHAN, who regaled me with the facts in his pursuit of a pair of shoes costing less than \$12.

And while regaling, we bumped into BILL HART, with whom we stopped to talk for a minute, when along came WILLIAM BURNS, the great detective, which made me remember I had lost my keys and wondered if I dared ask Mr. Burns to find them.

DAVE ROSE, former mayor of Milwaukee, breezed along and began to talk of this and that, winding up by saying: "I did know a lot of good fellows, but they're all dead."

Would suggest you call the "Tub" "The Wart," as no one seems to know what else it is—but a bump on the avenue. MRS. A. VAN REUTH, 402 Tenth street northeast.

Have you seen Jourman Parsons? L. B. PERKINS, whose office is in the Riggs building, has been appealed to by his old colored "mammy" to look about Washington to see if he can locate her son, Jourman Parsons, who came to Washington several months ago and has not been heard of by her—since.

"Will you help me find him?" says Mr. Perkins to me. "I would rather bring some good cheer into the heart of this, my good old mammy, than to have the finest home in the city of Washington."

HARRY B. GOODWIN, of the Marine Corps, suggests naming one of the "tubs" Semper Fidelis, the motto of the corps.

JACK DALY, who has been temporarily editing a paper somewhere in the pie belt of New England, is in the city en route to the army. He has enlisted and is the second private I have heard of in the city.

PEYTON B. FLETCHER says he has the choir and boys W. S. S. with the money the choir pays him, and here's hoping the choirmaster raises his pay.

Once Overs

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Every time your superior objects to the way you have done a certain piece of work do you feel that you would like to tell him what you think of him and resign?

If you do you have the wrong spirit. In the big majority of cases the man ahead of there because he has demonstrated that he is capable of filling the superior position. He has shown himself able to advise and correct errors.

Of course, he is not free from errors himself, and, in turn, his superior corrects and objects and overturns some of the things he does. It is so all the way up and down the line. If he were not spoken to about his mistakes and you were not stopped from making your mistakes, you can see very readily what a botch this world would be.

In certain ways your method may be superior, but it is up to you to do as the boss directs while you are under him. You know if you were in his place you would insist upon your plans being carried out to the letter. Do you get the idea?

